

Summary of Public Comments

Environmental Justice Workshop

Thursday, June 24, 2010

1. Jason Coughenour, representing the Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD), inquired from what source the poverty level information was obtained for the 2008 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Environmental Justice (EJ) analysis.
2. Beth Steckler, representing Climate Plan, inquired how the methodology would change, in terms of the SCS and the goals of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in accordance with SB 375.
3. Ms. Steckler asked if it would be possible to have a workshop on the modeling that will be used for the 2012 RTP. Jessica Meaney, representing Safe Routes to School, a National Partnership, agreed that a workshop geared toward people who are not professional modelers would be beneficial.
4. Ms. Meaney requested that more focus be placed on bicycling and walking and that safety issues involving bicycling be addressed. Ms. Meaney also expressed concern that age was not addressed in the report, and was particularly concerned about the children that are being impacted.
5. Ezequiel Gutierrez, Jr., representing the Public Law Center in Santa Ana, stated that he believes that for true environmental justice, as applied to city and regional planning, there should be more environmental justice that benefits the communities that represent the region, including low income and minority communities. Mr. Gutierrez stated that emphasis should be placed on taking measurable steps to benefit those communities and not just marginalizing the adverse impacts.
6. Neal Richman, representing BreatheLA, stated that he would like to see an analysis that identifies the primary environmental justice challenges of the region with some quantitative basis. Mr. Richman further stated that he believes more baseline information should be provided, such as where the SCAG region stands compared to other regions, and where the region is historically in terms of the issues. He also added that he would like to see a document that quantitatively identifies the primary EJ challenges of the region.

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7. Robert Garcia, Executive Director of The City Project, referenced a January 2010 letter from the Federal Transportation Authority (FTA) written to MTC and BART, which in part stated that before they would consider approving funds for the Oakland Connector Project, MTC and BART would have to submit an equity plan and analysis. Mr. Garcia stated that MTC and BART did not adequately address the matter and consequently the FTA cut off federal funding for the project.
8. Maricela Morales, representing CPH/Central Coast Alliance for a Sustainable Economy, stated that it is imperative that SCAG have baseline issues in terms of what the region is facing. She further stated that the mitigation and benefits must be greater in those areas that are carrying the disproportionate burden of negative impacts because those areas are starting from a lower baseline. Ms. Morales also stated that the analysis must be conveyed at the local level.
9. Daniel Freedman, representing the American Lung Association of California, stated that public health is the overriding issue. Mr. Freedman further stated that he would like to see public health brought to the forefront in terms of air pollution impacts on communities, such as visual impacts and impacts on health (asthma, obesity, walkability).
10. Beth Steckler, representing Climate Plan, inquired if the Housing Plus Transportation Affordability Index is being considered as part of the 2012 RTP.
11. Lisa Payne, representing Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing, expressed concern about the jobs/housing balance and coordinating housing and transportation planning. Ms. Payne stated that in order to reduce GHG emissions, a formal economy as well as an informal economy must be addressed.
12. There was a consensus among the attendees that gentrification issues need to be addressed. It was also generally noted that more discussion is needed about how to disseminate EJ information to the appropriate decision-makers.